

**CELEBRATING OUR RE-DEDICATION
AND RE-OPENING WEEKEND
AUGUST 17-19, 2018**



**CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL
THE KARAITE JEWS OF AMERICA**



The Mission of The Karaite Jews of America (KJA),
Congregation B'nai Israel,
And The Karaite-Jewish Cultural Center

“Honoring our Heritage, Embracing our Future”

Congregation B'nai Israel in Daly City, California, re-opening this weekend, August 17-19, 2018 after a year-plus closure to modernize, renovate and expand its facility, is the spiritual, educational and cultural home for the San Francisco Bay Area Karaite Jewish community, and for Karaite Jews living throughout the United States. It is the only Karaite-Jewish congregation in the United States.

Our Mission Is To:

- Celebrate the legacy and preserve the religious and cultural traditions that represent our core identity by fostering community within an environment designed for meaningful worship under the auspices of a learned Rabbi, by delivering caring life cycle resources, and by offering inspiring social and educational activities to children and adults.
- Broaden our cultural and religious traditions by remaining relevant in an evolving world, and cultivate the next generation of Karaite Jews to carry on our history through shared learning – from old to young and young to old.
- Inform and educate the larger Jewish world about our Karaite history, traditions, and current state of affairs through programs, publications and a strong internet presence, with the objective of fostering mutual respect and creating strong alliances in an ever more challenging world.

Re-Dedication And Celebration Weekend
August 17-19, 2018
Program Schedule

Friday, August 17

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 5:30 pm | Casual buffet dinner |
| 7:50 pm | Leil Shabbat Service
Post-service – Singing with Hazan Rotem Cohen
Learning with Tomer Mangoubi |

Saturday, August 18

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 9:30 am | Shabbat Service and Sanctuary Re-Consecration |
| 12:30 (approx.) | Post-service gala Oneg Shabbat lunch to celebrate our re-opening |
| 2:00 pm | Afternoon of discussion and seminars with our distinguished visitors from Israel and other special guests including Rami Mangoubi |
| 8:00 pm | Havdalah Service |

Sunday, August 19

An Afternoon of Learning and Celebration bringing together the Karaite Jewish community with the larger Jewish world of the Bay Area – 1:00 to 5:00 pm.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 12:15 pm | Registration and check-in |
| 1:00 pm | Welcome by KJA President David Ovadia |
| 1:30 pm | A Panel Discussion: "The Global Future of Karaite Judaism" with participants from Israel and KJA Program Director Shawn Lichaa
Question: How do we remain relevant in an evolving world and cultivate the next generation of Karaite Jews?
<i>Moderator: Maryellen Himell-Ovadia</i> |
| 2:15 pm | Questions and Open Discussion |
| 2:45 pm | "The Karaite Liturgical and Vocal Tradition"
A Musical Presentation by Celebrity Hazan, Rotem Cohen |
| 3:15 pm | Festive Reception, Open House and Dedication of Rooms
Hors d'oeuvres buffet, surprises, and prizes!
Musical Entertainment by renowned Bay Area artist John Erlich on Oud, (Arabic lute) and vocals. John may be joined by Susanna Goldenstein on Tablah, (Arabic goblet drum). |

An Open Letter And Call To Action from KJA Board President, David Ovadia

With enormous gratitude to all those donors, volunteers and supporters who have contributed so much to our effort, we gather this weekend to celebrate the successful conclusion of Phase One of our \$1.2 million "Foundation for the Future" Campaign. Thanks to the efforts of so many who have helped us achieve this goal through their contributions of time, funding, and good advice, we are poised to embrace the future in a newly enhanced environment designed for spiritual engagement, community building, learning, and fun.

And we are so pleased to inaugurate all of this now, as our holiest season is soon upon us - the High Holidays of Yom Teruah/Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and then Sukkot and Simchat Torah. It is a blessing to be able to observe these important days in our restored synagogue.

However, Congregation B'nai Israel exists not only as a place of worship, it also serves as a cultural link from our ancestors and our heritage to our children. So many young Karaite Jews have told us they want to be more tied to their roots, to learn where they came from, and to be part of an active community. That is why our Campaign goal did not solely focus on renovations of the sanctuary, but rather on expanding the building, in order to establish the new Karaite Jewish Cultural Center as a lively gathering place for learning and fellowship.

Where Did We Come From?

The Karaite Jewish community whose roots in the Middle East go back more than a millennia, experienced its "second exodus" from Egypt after 1948, emigrating as refugees primarily to Israel. (There are currently approximately 40,000 Karaite Jews in Israel and 1,600 in the United States). Hundreds more scattered throughout the world, mainly in Europe and South America. Congregation B'nai Israel represents several hundred families in the San Francisco Bay Area, many of whom settled through the assistance of HIAS and JFCS. Our community is the largest outside of Israel and our synagogue is a locus of activity for Karaite Jews throughout the U.S.

A brief history of our local community: In the early years members worshiped in homes, rented spaces, and between 1984 and 1990 Congregation Peninsula Sinai, which again so generously hosted us during renovations. By 1990 we were sufficiently well established and had secured the resources to purchase a property in San Francisco's Sunset District. Facing blatant anti-Semitism in the neighborhood in that era and needing space, in 1994 we had the good fortune to be able to purchase our building in Daly City from a congregation merging with another.

It is in this building that we have seen four generations of Karaite Jews through a myriad of life cycle events, providing a home away from home for first generation refugees, and a sense of community for those born here. Through all this history, B'nai Israel has not charged dues; has no paid staff; and has been run by many volunteers including Board Members, members of the

Sisterhood Committee and others who serve in a variety of capacities. These individuals, so generous with their time, lead services; attend to life cycle events; help the sick, needy, and aged; organize learning and social programs; and manage office duties and communications.

My family and I arrived in San Francisco in 1963, and like many in our community we were stateless refugees who overcame terrible obstacles to find a receptive home in America. I was just turning 13. Now all these years later, and as your KJA President, my objective is to pass on my pride in our community's accomplishments by keeping our heritage alive. As refugees from Egypt, we have found great success in the United States. It is time to look to the future.

Where Are We Going?

So, having completed Phase One of our Campaign, I am working with our Board to lay the groundwork for Phase Two in order to implement a vision of enhanced programming through the Cultural Center. We need everyone's help to accomplish this. We must not only preserve the best of our traditions, but also evolve in order to provide meaningful engagement for the young who are maturing in an environment very different from our parents or grandparents. Without the young, there will be no one left to remember them, or us. Therefore, we are beginning to discuss our long-term objectives with younger members of the congregation, as well as with community leaders and donors whose cornerstone commitments propelled us so dramatically toward achieving our capital goals this year.

With young Karaite Jews seeking a sense of identity and belonging, the time is now. And in the context of increasing isolationism, anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism there is clearly a need to strengthen dialogue with the Karaite community in Israel and among all branches of world Jewry. We know that our Karaite Jewish history offers a unique perspective that can be of huge benefit beyond our numbers, as we jointly face the challenges before us.

Only in partnership will we have the resources to sustain our goals. These include increasing dialogue with our colleagues in Israel and others in the larger Jewish community; expanding education and program activities through the Cultural Center, especially for the young; increasing our scholarly efforts through the Karaite Press; preserving our history through oral and video recordings and through the expansion of our library; and hiring a permanent Rav.

We celebrate today, but we must work together tomorrow and in the years to come to achieve these goals. Thank you to all who have been with us on this exciting journey thus far, and whom we count on in the days ahead. We need the support and participation of everyone in the community, if we are to continue to thrive.

Thank you for joining us this weekend, and we look forward to seeing you often in the future. May you and all your family enjoy a happy and healthy year, full of blessings.

David Ovadia, August 18, 2018

Karaite Jews Of America
Honors Our Acting Ravs, Board Members, Committee Members,
And Past Board Presidents Who Have Done So Much
To Sustain our KJA Community And To Help It Grow

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**We Are Grateful To Everyone Celebrating With Us This Weekend,
And We Especially Acknowledge The Support of The Karaite Community
Leaders Of Israel Who Are Joining Us To Help Re-Consecrate
The Sanctuary of Congregation B'nai Israel**

Moshe Firrouz, Chief Rabbi of the Karaite Jewish Community in Israel

Rabbi Moshe ben Yoseph Firrouz is a Torah scholar, Register of Marriage and Divorce, and the spiritual leader of the Karaite Jewish community in Israel. He serves as Chairman of the Karaite Council of Sages and is the Chief Rabbi of the community. Rav Moshe fulfilled his military service in the Israeli Air Force, prior to studying at Ben Gurion University in the Negev (BGU), where he earned a BA in Nuclear Engineering and a Master's Degree in Management and Safety Engineering. He is a PhD candidate at BGU's Faculty of Sciences – Humanities and Social Sciences, in the Department of Jewish Thought in Israel. His research deals with the book of the wise Judea Hadassi, "Eshcol Farm".

Since his ordination in 2007 and his election as Chief Hakham by the Karaite Council of Sages in 2011, Rav Moshe presides over life cycle events including marriage and divorce according to biblical tradition. In addition, he teaches Torah and religion, presides over conversions, publishes scholarly materials, acts as a certified ritual slaughterer, operates the Israel Karaite website, and represents the community at conferences and lectures. Rabbi Moshe is married to Yael and is the father of four children.

Eli Shemuel, President of the "Universal Karaite" Community in Israel

Second-generation graduate of Ben-Gurion University (BGU), with a degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering, Eli works as a researcher in this department at BGU. Recently elected President of the Karaite Jewish community in Israel, Eli is the son of Rabbi Magdi Shemuel, Vice Chief Rabbi of the community and Rabbi of Synagogue "Keter Torah" in Ashdod. Eli is the youngest of three siblings.

Following his three-year service in a secret department of the Israeli army, Eli spent six months in California working primarily with our Karaite Jews of America community in the Bay Area, and in the Los Angeles area. Among other projects he spearheaded at B'nai Israel, Eli played a key role in the creation of a new Haggadah for the American Karaite Jewish community, helped capture the history of our community through oral and video interviews, helped implement cantorial study and youth education, recorded Karaite materials to YouTube, and more. We are delighted to welcome Eli Shemuel back to Congregation B'nai Israel to help celebrate our re-opening.

Rotem Cohen, Hazzan

Rotem serves as Cantor in the Karaite community in Ashdod and is a poet. When he was young he studied cantorial singing with Rabbi Hefetz, and later learned from the young cantors taught by Rabbi Hefetz before his death, including cantors Yossi Yefet, Ben Yosef, Nir Nissim and others. He has recorded the entire Torah scroll, the Haftarot, the Piyut Parasha, the Blessings Book, and more.

Eight years ago, Rotem participated in "Israeli Idol" and reached a "respectable place" but his last competition was to take place on a Sunday, during the Shavuot holiday of the Karaites, so he did not participate in the live broadcast. Articles about him began to appear in the Israeli press, and as Rotem writes, "I became famous for this. Later on, the Latin-Israeli singer Rotem Cohen became famous, and now it's a bit confusing because we're both singers in Israel". Today, Rotem works as a musical producer, musical arranger, recording technician, and singer at weddings, bar mitzvahs and more. Rotem asks "G-d to grant me the strength to continue to engage in activities that will advance our holy community and merit seeing the growth of the community and the beginning of redemption".

Avi Yefet, Manager of the Karaite Heritage Center in Jerusalem

Born In Ramla, Israel, Avi has worked in the Karaite community since 2015, where he has played a central role in planning and rebuilding the Karaite Heritage Center in Jerusalem. He now manages the Center and the museum that is part of the complex of the synagogue A'nnan Ben David, the oldest active synagogue in the world dating back to the 8th century but reconstructed in the 12th century. The goal of the Karaite Heritage Center is to explain the origins of the Karaite community living in Jerusalem since the 8th century, to present exhibitions on its golden age, and to record the community's vast contribution toward the preservation of the Bible's wording and the modern Hebrew language.

Before joining the Heritage Center, Avi was a contractor and an aerospace electrician. He studied at the Israel Aerospace Industries College and worked at Aerospace Industries Ltd. before his service in the Israel Air Force, where he was an attack helicopters electrician.

A Special Debt Of Gratitude Goes To Our Sister Congregations That Provided A Home For Us During Construction, Welcoming Us for Shabbat Services And Making Our Congregation Feel Embraced By The Larger Jewish Community

We thank **Congregation Peninsula Sinai** in Foster City and especially its wonderful Rabbi Corey Helfand, Rabbi Rebecca Schatz, Rabbi Emeritus Marvin Goodman, and Cantor Doron Shapira who did so much to make us feel like members of their community. This was something of a homecoming for the Karaite Jewish community in the Bay Area as Peninsula Sinai often served as our home away from home in the years before we had a synagogue of our own. Thank you to the Board, to the spiritual leadership, and to the members of Peninsula Sinai for their continuing friendship toward us.

We also thank the leadership and members of **Congregation Sherith Israel** in San Francisco, who graciously welcomed us for Shabbat services on a number of occasions over the last year. A special thank you goes to Rabbi Jessica Zimmerman-Graf, to Cantor David Frommer, to Nancy Sheftel-Gomes, and to the Board and the congregation of Sherith Israel, for their warm hospitality.

Your members are always welcomed at B'nai Israel and we look forward to continuing partnerships.

The Karaite Jews of America Acknowledges with Grateful Thanks
The Following Generous Donors, Whose Contributions
Have Made Possible The Successful Conclusion Of Phase One
Of Our "Foundation For The Future" Campaign

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*** Some Anonymous Gifts Were Given in Memory of Loved Ones

Z"L Deceased

Please excuse any unintended errors or omissions. We will make every effort to correct these in the next printing of this donor list.

Special Acknowledgments

Since Congregation B'nai Israel was established in 1994 as the only Karaite Jewish synagogue in the United States, numerous individuals have selflessly given their time to help sustain our community. We thank all those who gave so much of themselves over those past years, as well as during the prior era when our refugee community was just establishing itself in the Bay Area.

Today we acknowledge with grateful thanks the following, whose exceptional efforts greatly contribute to the character of our congregation, the spirit of our community, the success of our "Foundation for the Future" Campaign thus far, and the renovation of our synagogue.

Emeritus Rav Joe Pessah,

For his spiritual leadership of B'nai Israel over many years
and for his devoted attention to the life cycle needs of generations of congregants.

Acting Rav Joe Moussa,

For carrying on an extraordinary volunteer tradition of spiritual leadership of our congregation and
serving the life cycle needs of our congregants.

KJA Board President David Ovadia and Maryellen Himell-Ovadia,

Who as a team provided unparalleled leadership to our "Foundation for the Future" Campaign, through David's conceptual engineering, design, and project management of the renovation and expansion of our synagogue; and through Maryellen's guidance of the fundraising campaign.

Henry Mourad,

Who as past President, presided over the launching of the "Foundation for the Future" Campaign
and actively supported its implementation.

Shawn Lichaa,

Whose vision in establishing the Karaite Press, expanding educational activities, managing our weekly newsletter and doing public speaking, has greatly broadened knowledge about Karaite Judaism.

Marc Khedr,

The tireless volunteer Gabbai of our synagogue, whose efforts include but are not limited to keeping
B'nai Israel's building operations functioning effectively.

Michael Ovadia,

For contributing much time and professional expertise to the development and maintenance of our
www.karaites.org website, and for his creative input to all things digital.

**Contractors Gabe and Bernadette Moufarrej, Gem Builders
And Architect Martin Bernstein**

For Their Commitment to the Successful Renovation and Expansion of B'nai Israel
Through The Design and Construction Phases.

Artist Ibrahim Levy,

Who has gifted us with his art works of beauty and devotion for our new Social Hall.

Further Acknowledgments

Over the last few years, many individuals have supported the Campaign planning and implementation; and have volunteered their time to lead social, spiritual, or educational activities for the community while our synagogue was closed. We thank everyone who has provided encouragement, lent his or her ear, heart, brain or strong back to our work. But we want to give a special shout out to those who have really gone the extra mile to help ensure the success of our efforts - both within the community and beyond.

A Big Thank You To

Zaki El Kodsi, Rachel and Ofira Farag, Anita Friedman, Nancy Goldberg, Rabbi Marvin Goodman, Danny Grossman, Rabbi Corey Helfand, Zaki Jacob, David Khedr, Victor Khedr, Fortune Lichaa, Fred Lichaa, Sara Lichaa, Rabbi Brian Lurie, Abraham and Jeanne Massuda, Nora Massuda, Jacob Moussa (Pessah), Rachel Moussa (Pesah), Paul Nounou, Bernard Osher, Fred Ovadia, Isaac Ovadia, Jack Ovadia, Robert D. Ovadia, Amin Pessah, Maurice Pessah, Tad Taube, Kathleen Wahed, and Gina Waldman.

In Closing – Why Did We Launch The “Foundation For The Future” Campaign And What Are The Next Steps?

Our immediate objective in Phase One was to secure the financial resources we needed to expand the building by approximately 30%, renovate the existing sanctuary, and modernize the facilities. Our longer-term objective is to create new educational, cultural, and social programs to strengthen outreach to the next generation, and to a widening circle of interested supporters. The larger Jewish world has much to learn from the remarkable history of the Karaite Jews, and by establishing B’nai Israel as our national Cultural Center we can have an impact beyond our small numbers.

By expanding B’nai Israel’s capacity to better serve the community through the creation of the Cultural Center in Phase Two, we can ensure that the synagogue will be a vibrant educational and spiritual gathering place for years to come. Anticipated new activities include advocacy efforts on behalf of the global Karaite Jewish community, increased youth education resources, new adult education courses, as well as an augmented program of cultural and social events to engage the whole family. Understanding that our community includes members who live far beyond the Bay Area, we envision an enhanced web presence, and we hope to expand the recording of oral and video histories of Karaite Jews in the United States to sustain and share our legacy. We will continue to increase publications through our new and very successful Karaite Press, and to create an archive of historical materials for scholarly use. And, we hope to develop the sustainable funding needed to engage a permanent Rav.

We have the capacity to reach beyond ourselves and to help strengthen the larger Jewish community as we strengthen our own. And through the resources we seek to develop in the years ahead, the young members of our community will have more opportunities to learn about where they came from and who they are. Our “Foundation for the Future” Campaign is just the start of a renaissance for the Karaite Jewish community in the United States.

*For Ways To Get Involved And Support Our Efforts Go To WWW.Karaites.org.
Or Contact David Ovadia at davidovadia62@gmail.com, or Shawn Lichaa at shawnlichaa@gmail.com.*

A Prayer Of Thanks For The Re-Consecration of Our Sanctuary Congregation B'nai Israel

ועתה אלהינו מודים אנחנו לך ומהללים לשם תפארתך : ונאמר ברוך אתה יי הטוב
והמטיב : וברוך אלהינו מלך העולם אשר החינו וקימנו והגענו בשלום לזמן הזה לחנכת
בית הכנסת (אמן) :

ואת כל אשר הכינו ביושר לבבם יצליחו לבנות לשם אלהינו להגדיל תורתו הטהורה
ולהאדירה : הם אשר יי קורא נדיבי קהלתנו הקדושה אנשים ונשים, הכל התנדבו כמסת
ידהם כברכת יי אשר נתן להם : הקדוש ברוך הוא ישלם שכרם אלף פעמים (אמן) :
וכן יזכנו יי אלהינו לראות בנין ציון וירושלם עיר קדשנו (אמן) : חזקו ויאמץ לבבכם כל
המיחלים ליי : יי עוז לעמו יתן יי יברך את עמו בשלום : ברוך יי לעולם אמן ואמן

Translation

And we thank you G-d and praise your glorious name. And we will say - You are the benevolent One, and the beneficent G-d. Blessed be our G-d, King of the Universe, Who kept us alive, sustained us and led us to reach this period in peace for the rededication of this synagogue. (Amen).

May all those who with integrity in their hearts be successful to build for the sake of our G-d, in order to be enlightened in the Torah and see its grandness. These are the people whom G-d calls the sustainers of our holy congregation, men and women. All have donated according to the stretch of their hand and according to the blessings that G-d gave them. May G-d reward them a thousand times. (Amen). May G-d give us the hope to see the restorations of the rebuilding of Zion and Jerusalem our holy city. (Amen). Be strong and of courageous heart, all who address their hopes to G-d. G-d will strengthen his people. G-d will bless his people by granting them peace. Blessed be G-d forever (Amen and Amen).

Transliteration

Ve-'atta eloheinu modim ana'hnu lakh umhalelim lesheim tif-arteikha : Veinomar barukh
atta Adonai ha-ttov vei-hammeitiv : U-varukh eloheinu Meilekh ha-'olam asher hei-'heiyanu
veikiyyeimanu vei-higgei-'anu beishalom lazzeiman hazzei la-'hannukat beit hakeneset
(Amen) :

Vei-eit Kol asher hei-khinu bei-yosher leivav yatsli-'hu livnot lesheim Eloheinu lei-haghdil
torato hatteihora vei-la-ha-addira : Heim asher Adonai korei nei-divei kehillateinu hakkei-
dosha anashim vei-nashim, Hakkol hitnaddeibu kei-massat yeid-heim kei-birkhat Adonai
asher natan laheim : Hakkadosh barukh hou yei-shalleim seikharam eilef pei-'amim (Amen):
Vei-khein yeizakkenu Adonai Eiloheinu lir-ot binyan Tsion vi-yeirusha-layim 'ir kodsheinu
(Amen): 'Hizku vei-ya-ametz leivav-kheim kol hamya-'halim LAdonai : Adonai 'oz lei-'ammo
yitten, Adonai yei-vareikh eit ammo bashalom : Barukh Adonai lei-'olam. (Amen vei Amen).

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